

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Fishbein and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am from Danbury and a supporter of CT Against Gun Violence. I am a retired information services provider literature reviewer/online search specialist on many topics of great concern in these trying times. As a survivor of gun violence of more than 45 years, I have seen the need for greater gun violence prevention grow ever more urgent over that period of time. Several acquaintances died by suicide made ever easier because they had easy access to firearms.

Connecticut was the first state in the nation to pass an Extreme Risk Protection Order law, in 1999. It offers a means of last resort, with due process protections, to temporarily remove firearms from individuals judged to be at risk of imminent harm to themselves or others. It has been shown to prevent firearm suicide and stop mass shootings. It is time to strengthen the law so that it works harder to prevent gun violence. In particular, when the protection order expires, it should be a requirement that the subject is no longer at risk of violence before the firearms are returned. That is not the case now.

Allowing family members to petition the court directly, as 12 other states do, provides an alternative means of initiating the process for people who are reluctant to involve law enforcement at the outset, because they fear law enforcement or are concerned about stigmatizing the gun owner as a criminal.

I ask that you favorably report HB-6355 out of committee so that the General Assembly can vote to strengthen our Extreme Risk Protection law so that it works harder to prevent firearm suicide and homicide. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sally A. Mandler

Danbury, CT